## XXXVI. *The Effects of the* Opuntia, *or Prickly Pear, and of the* Indigo *Plant, in colouring the Juices of living Animals. Communicated by* H. Baker, *F. R. S.*

June 23d, 1757.

Read June 23, 1757. MR. Baker received a letter yeſterday from Dr. Alexander Garden, of Charles Town in South Carolina, part of which he hopes he ſhall be excuſed for laying before the Royal Society.

The Doctor writes thus:——"As you deſired, I "tried the effects of the prickly pear in colouring "the urine. A few days after your letter, I went "down to one of the iſlands, and gathered ſome of "the fruit, and gave four of the pears to a child of "three years of age, and ſix pears to one of five. "The next morning I examined the urine of both, "and it appeared of a very lively red colour, as if "tent-wine had been mixed with clear water. The "urine of the eldeſt was deeper coloured, and of a "darker look: the youngeſt (who always naturally "made clear urine) was of a more lively and beau-"tiful red. Next day I gave ſix pears to a Negroe "wench, who gave ſuck, and ſtrictly forbad her "ſuckling her child for ſix or eight hours; and "then taking ſome of her milk in a tea-cup, and "ſetting it by for ſome hours, the cream had a red-"diſh luſtre, tho' it was very faint.

"I was led to this laſt experiment by an obſerva-"tion, which I made on the milk of cows, who

"had

" had fed in an indigo-field: the indigo had not " only tinged their urine blue, but the cream of " the milk was of a moſt beautiful blue colour, and " had a radiated appearance from the centre (Is it " not hence probable, that the dye is the oily part " of the plant?). The milk underneath was clear " and white as uſual."

Dr. Garden wrote, a year ago, that the prickly pear grows in great abundance about Carolina; and alſo that the cochineal inſects are found upon it; but hitherto no attempts have been made to cure them as the Spaniards do. In hope, that ſome rich dye may be produced from the plant itſelf, Mr. Baker propoſed ſome experiments to Dr. Garden, which he intends to proſecute this ſummer.

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## XXXVII. *An Account of an extraordinary Shower of black Duſt, that fell in the Iſland of* Zetland *20th* October 1755 *. *In a Letter from Sir* Andrew Mitchell, *of* Weſtſhore, *Bart. to* John Pringle, *M. D. F. R. S.*

SIR, Pall-Mall, June 9th, 1757.

Read June 23, 1757. IN compliance with your deſire, I made particular inquiry, whether at or about the time the earthquake happened at Liſbon the 1ſt of November 1755. any uncommon phænomena

* See Phil. Tranſact. Vol. xlix. Part 2. p. 509.